



City of Ashtabula
Ashtabula City Council
Safety Forces Committee
Monday, April 14, 2025 at 8:30 AM
Council Chambers
4230 Lake Avenue, Ashtabula, OH 44004

Minutes

Opening of Committee Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting of the Ashtabula City Council Safety Forces Committee was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.

Roll Call

Members Present: Chair: Ward 2 Councilor Terence Guerriero, Vice Chair: Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio, Member: Council President John Roskovics

Absent:

Officers Present: City Manager James Timonere, Clerk of Council Stacy Millberg, City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper

Ashtabula Department Heads Present: Police Chief Robert Stell, Fire Chief Shawn Gruber

Visitors:

Sunshine Law Certification

A quorum was established as defined by the Ashtabula City Council Rules of Order. The meeting met the requirements of the Ohio Sunshine Laws Open Meetings Act.

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Visitors

Special Guest Presentation

Police Department – Chief’s Report

Chief Rob Stell provided the report. The statistics for March are consistent with previous years. There have been several retirements with more to come. The department is short-staffed, so staff are being moved around to help alleviate the problem until more officers are hired. Six people passed the Civil Service Entrance Exam that was administered last month. Half of them have not completed the basic police academy training. There will be seven positions to be filled by the end of the year. The department will be looking to hire lateral transfers as well to fill those positions. Committee Chair Terence Guerriero asked for additional information on the entrance exam. Chief Stell stated that a score of 70 percent is needed to pass. City Manager James Timonere stated that the test is valid for one year, but can be extended an additional year if needed. Before a candidate can be hired, they must have their Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) certification. The City does have a scholarship program through the Shelby family to assist with the cost of the academy. City Manager James Timonere stated two individuals took advantage of the scholarship; however, only one sat for the test. In the past, the City paid for individuals to go through the academy. City Manager James Timonere stated that may be something to consider doing again. Chief Rob Stell stated it takes approximately five months to complete the academy if individuals

attend full-time. It will take approximately 10 months to attend on a part-time basis. New hires also complete 16 weeks of field training after they are hired. The field training is shorter for lateral transfers. City Manager James Timonere stated he is hoping to have the vacation seniority legislation for lateral transfers finalized so it can be presented for Council's consideration at the April 21 meeting. Council President Roskovics asked about the schedule of police officers. Chief Rob Stell stated that road officers work 12-hour shifts and office staff, including the detective bureau, work eight-hour shifts Monday through Friday. Officers frequently work overtime because of staffing issues and detectives also work overtime to help on the road. City Manager James Timonere stated he is looking at purchasing at least two more SUVs for the police department this year.

City Manager James Timonere stated the chief is also working on finalizing plans for the radio authentication that needs to be completed. It will cost approximately \$22,000.

APD Stats - March 2025

Fire Department – Chief's Report

Chief Shawn Gruber provided the report. Statistics for March are consistent with previous years. A Civil Service Entrance Exam was administered for the fire department last month. Thirteen people signed up, but only 12 showed up. The physical agility portion of the test was held at the fire department last week. Eight individuals passed the physical agility test. Two of the candidates still have more schooling to complete. Chief Shawn Gruber stated he hopes to start the interview process soon. Chief Shawn Gruber stated that he is being proactive in filling future vacancies. Several vacancies will not occur until the beginning of next year. There are four vacancies expected. Committee Chair Terence Guerriero asked about schooling for firefighters. Chief Shawn Gruber stated there are several schools individuals can attend, including ATech. Students that complete the program at ATech finish with a basic EMT and firefighter certification. Other schools offer paramedic programs. Chief Shawn Gruber stated that he is retiring next year. A chief's test will be administered later this month. Two internal candidates will sit for the test and then the City Manager will interview them and choose.

Chief Rob Stell stated the police department and fire department will be hosting Safety Town again this summer. The program is for incoming kindergarten students. Registration is now open for students as well as student volunteers who will be in 9th through 12th grade next year. Registration forms are available at local schools during kindergarten registration, at local daycare centers and preschools, at the police department or online on the police department's Facebook page.

AFD Stats - March 2025

City Manager's Report

City Manager James Timonere stated the chief covered everything in their reports. He said the most important thing will be getting the positions filled in the police department.

City Solicitor's Report

City Solicitor Cecilia Cooper stated funding is finally in place from the county for a new victim advocate. The advocate should be on board by May 5. She is hoping to have the MOU for City Council to vote on and the City Manager to sign by the next council meeting. The money is already in the Solicitor's Office budget. The advocate will be shared with the County. She will work two and a half days in the City and two and a half days in the County. The advocate helps victims navigate the criminal justice process, including supporting them during court proceedings. The position is partially funded by a grant obtained by the County.

Unfinished Business

Golf cart legislation

City Manager James Timonere stated the map has not changed much, it now comes down to whether council wishes to proceed with legislation. He has concerns about allowing golf carts throughout the entire City. Things such as how it will be managed and rules and regulations will need to be discussed by council. Council President John Roskovics stated he does not think golf carts should be permitted south of the CSX railroad tracks. He suggested allowing golf carts on a trial basis and then repealing the ordinance if it does not work. Council President John Roskovics suggested bringing the matter to council for discussion.

Ward 1 Councilor Kym Foglio stated the parking on Bridge Street is terrible. Visibility is difficult at crosswalks, and it is difficult to travel in either direction with the cars parked on both sides of the street. City Manager James Timonere stated the striping is not completely accurate down the middle of the road. It has worn off enough that it can be corrected when the City does striping this year. The City has also looked at painting actual parking spots. However, then there would be less parking available because of the size regulations for parking spaces.

New Business

Next Meeting

May 12, 2025

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m. by Committee Chair Terence Guerriero.